

his administration, President Obama has started to stop the bleeding and begun to heal our economy. The cornerstone of the President's near-term plan to end the freefall he inherited is the Economic Recovery Act, which will save and create 3.5 million jobs, while making critically needed investments in roads, bridges, tunnels, education, health care, and energy.

President Obama, along with Democrats in Congress, understands that as deep as our immediate problems may be, the worst mistake we could make is to stop investing for the future.

That is why the President's budget proposal lays the groundwork for an economy that just doesn't recover in the short term but also prospers in the long term. That starts with ending the previous administration's era of passing the buck, refusing to make tough choices, to plan for the future, or to hold anyone accountable for greed and corruption.

There will be no accounting tricks in the Obama budget. There will be honesty, accountability, lower taxes for working families, smart investments for a long-term prosperity that reaches beyond the privileged to lift up the middle class.

One of the most critical investments we can make today is in a new national energy policy that finally begins to end our addiction to oil. Since the first Model-T Ford left the assembly line more than 80 years ago, the risks associated with oil consumption have been known. Today, we face a three-pronged oil crisis threatening our economy, our national security, and our environment.

After years of writing bigger and bigger checks to foreign nations for more and more barrels of oil, this budget finally takes the logical approach that all Americans understand: We need to reduce our consumption, and we need to find new renewable sources of clean energy that we can grow, creating hundreds of thousands of good jobs right here at home.

We must make these investments now and, if we do, we will not only accomplish those goals but also lower future energy bills for every single American consumer, and we will save money for all middle-class families.

Remember, last year, we spent, buying oil from foreign nations, about a half trillion dollars, which is money that should have stayed at home. That is why President Obama is proposing a market-based cap on carbon pollution to drive production of renewable fuels and energy-efficient technology and reward companies that lead the way.

This budget will also invest \$15 billion a year to develop the renewable sources of energy that lie literally all around us—in the Sun, the wind, and just beneath the Earth in geothermal. All across America, the work of tapping these plentiful energy sources is underway.

In Pennsylvania, renewable energy has sparked more than \$1 billion in pri-

vate investment. In Iowa, shuttered factories have reopened to build parts for wind turbines. In Nevada, a State called the "Saudi Arabia of renewable energy," we already have enough renewable energy projects in operation to heat and cool hundreds of thousands of homes—without a drop of oil.

If we make renewable energy a priority in this budget, these projects will just be the beginning. The solar power in Nevada and the desert Southwest alone could meet our entire energy needs 7 times over—the needs of this country.

The wind energy in the Great Plains, the Midwest, and off both of our coasts is similarly abundant. The potential for geothermal energy—still largely untapped—is staggering.

Until recently, all of these outstanding projects have been moving forward with little, if any, Federal support. Our landscape is dotted with renewable energy projects, but right now we are not connecting the dots. The renewable energy is where people don't live; we need to bring that energy to where people live.

The fact that we are not connecting the dots has to end, and it will end when we begin to invest in a smarter and greener transmission grid that brings renewable energy from the places that produce it to the places that will use it.

We should be catalyzing the work of private sector innovators who are carrying the green revolution on their shoulders. Every job created by a new renewable energy project in California, Utah, Illinois, Nevada, or Iowa is a job that could never be shipped overseas.

Some on the other side may try to protect our country's biggest corporate polluters from cleaning up their act. Some may say that in this time of economic crisis, we should not be investing in our future. Some may criticize the President's budget, yet refuse to offer ideas of their own.

Over the next several weeks, we have the opportunity to engage in a serious and vigorous debate over this budget and the priorities it reflects.

I urge all my colleagues to choose sound policy over sound bites. We may not agree on everything, but I know we can agree that after 8 long years of irresponsibility, we must pass a budget that puts the American people first.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period of morning business for up to 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority con-

trolling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, what is the order?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senate is conducting morning business. The majority controls the next 24½ minutes.

#### THE BUDGET

Mrs. MURRAY. I thank the Chair.

Madam President, for years, we have talked about the fact that the annual budget process is the truest test of priorities that the President and Congress engage in. For years, I was concerned about the last administration's budgets, and I was very vocal about that—too little investment in America, too many gimmicks, and too much focus on the few and not the many. It was those budgets and the policies they imposed that led us to the challenges we are now facing.

President Obama inherited huge problems not of his own making. That is why his first budget blueprint is such a breath of fresh air. President Obama's budget is both a statement of priorities and a test of our commitment to making our country stronger for all Americans.

Our Nation faces serious challenges now, but it is not a time to shy away from the investments that will ensure our prosperity and our competitiveness in the future. His budget builds the foundation that will make America stronger by investing in health care, energy independence, and education. The President inherited an economic recession and staggering deficits. The shortsighted budgets and policies of the past have left our infrastructure crumbling, our education system falling behind, and the debt of war in the pockets of our grandchildren.

There is no doubt we have to take some serious steps to dig out of this hole. President Obama's budget takes steps to cut our deficit in half and to restore fairness to our tax system. Importantly, after 8 years of gimmicks, this budget is transparent and tells the American people exactly where we are spending our money. The President accounts for war spending and leaves room for natural disasters or other emergencies we might face.

The President has been honest about the challenges that face this country, and now he is being honest about where we need to invest. He has warned Congress and the American people about the sacrifice we all have to make to